RNA FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

RIVERVIEW Neighborhood Association

November, 1993

232 Ogden Avenue - Jersey City, N.J. 07307 - (201) 798-0493

RNA IS NOT AFFILIATED WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY, ORGANIZATION OR ELECTED OFFICIAL

MEETING MINUTES

Mayor Bret Schundler was the advertised speaker for the October RNA meeting. Unfortunately, a scheduling conflict prevented the Mayor from attending, but Deputy Mayor R. L. Williams did a fine job of filling in. The Deputy Mayor came to "pitch" the school voucher proposal. The voucher system, in case you haven't heard, would allow parents sending their children to private school to use state funds. Right now the City spends approximately $8,599.00 a year per child. Under this proposal, the state's portion of that amount, which is approximately $3,765.00, would be placed in a pool to be divided among all the students who attend private schools.

Supporters of this proposal claim it will help improve the level of education in the public schools by encouraging private schools to compete for these state educational funds. Opponents claim that it will draw away funds from our public school system, might be unconstitutional, and could possibly encourage segregation in our schools. Williams ended his statement by saying, "It is better to try and fail, then to fail to try."

Some other topics discussed with Williams were the community policing program and garbage pickup. After the coffee break, we heard reports on the Heights Coalition meeting, discussed proposals for the small park at Cuneo and Ogden, and planned the following RNA activities: Holiday caroling, the annual Harbor View Holiday Party, and this year's Food and Toy Drive.

Jack Rea won the 50/50. See you at the next RNA meeting on November 9th at 7:15 pm.

Maria Tuzzo, Acting Secretary

ANNUAL HARBOR VIEW PARTY

Plans are in full swing for this year's Holiday Party for the residents of the Harbor View Health Care Center. As of now, we have narrowed the dates to either Thursday, December 16th or Friday, December 17th. It will held in the afternoon right after the residents have had their lunch. As usual, we will have musical entertainment.

Volunteers are needed to serve refreshments and help entertain the guests at this annual holiday get-together of the residents and the neighborhood. Donations of dietetic baked goods are needed. If you can help in anyway, please attend the November meeting to assist in the planning.

RNA FOOD AND TOY DRIVE

RNA will again be accepting donations of nonperishable foods and toys (either new or used, but in working condition) for distribution by the Salvation Army for the holiday season. These donations can be brought to the November 9th and the December 14th meetings of RNA. Cash donations are acceptable and will be disbursed according to the donor's wishes. For information regarding other locations where these donations can be dropped off, please call Maria Tuzzo at 659-2245 after 6 p.m.

As the Holiday season approaches, please remember our less fortunate neighbors and friends. It is a small effort but a large reward to know that you have made some family's Holiday a little brighter with a contribution of some food or a toy.

COMMUNITY POLICING

Our community policeperson is Officer Andrew Lancalotti. He has been attending our recent monthly meetings to become acquainted with any local problems or concerns of the neighborhood. Please talk to him during the public portion of the meeting, or if necessary in private and address your concerns to him.

In addition, if there is a more immediate problem, he can be reached on duty by calling the North District desk at 547-5350 or5359. Leave a message for him and he will return the call as soon as possible.

He is eager to help improve our neighborhood and is encouraged by some of the early results of the program. But, remember, it is also our responsibility to make this program work by reporting any problems in our neighborhood to the police.

COMING EVENTS

RNA MEETING: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 9th AT 7:15 PM

AT THE HARBOR VIEW HEALTH CARE CENTER

a) GUEST SPEAKER: **Harry Schwartz,** representative of Christ Hospital
b) **RNA Food and Toy Drive for the Holidays**
c) **Discussion of upcoming Harbor View Party**

THE NEW CHAIR

As I sit down and give some thought as to what this article will be about, I draw blank thoughts. I've grown accustomed to the neighborhood with all it's quirks and maladies, but overall it's a nice place to live. I just wish that other people would feel the same and put in the effort to make it better.

Yes, I understand that life nowadays is a rush - complex and a timeeater. Now, not to say there aren't other people like myself who are concerned and devote their time to improving our little piece of the earth. But I'm giving thought to those who just go by in their lifes and put on blinders as to the structure called a neighborhood. If there are any readers out there with the smallest or biggest idea on how to continue to work for a better place to live - please, come and share your ideas at our next meeting. In the meantime, I'll continue to care and try to encourage a sense of place to those who are not thinking how their actions or inactions affect the big picture.

Ernest Quintero, Chair

CONRAD'S CORNER

Election is just a few days away with most tenants not even bothering to vote because they are on a rent ceiling and all our out-of-towners along the waterfront developments only paying thirty percent in taxes. All this leaves our senior citizens and homeowners paying the remaining taxes.

Our young Sir Galahad Mayor has come to the "rescue" by giving any senior citizens who can no longer pay their taxes the advice to get a reverse mortgage with the rationale that they can at least hold on to their property for a few more years. In addition, the homeowners are continually having to make up the difference with increased taxes. Meanwhile the tenants and out-of-towners are for the most part unaffected by all this. In a short time, there will be no home owners left to pay taxes. Does this mean that in the future, Jersey City might have to be run by out-of-towners and tenants?

At present, a reliable check on our City employees who live out of town but work in the City and give a fictitious address is at a high of 60 percent. Why worry how many school teachers, police, or firemen really live in the City. When they go home at night, most of our local merchants just close down their stores. Only the affluent home owner or tenant who has a car is able to get around and they go straight down to the malls to do their shopping. The others it seems have to go to soup kitchens to survive if they are not near a food market. Their life just becomes a matter of depending on food from a soup kitchen and then pulling down the shades and listening to the TV until the end comes.

There is no thought of charging the senior homeowner, who has paid taxes to the City all his life, only thirty percent of the taxes. Just take their house because they're going to die soon anyway. In a few years, all the old timers will be gone, so why waste time on them now. According to our Mayor, we must, after all, save our out-of-town developers if we want to survive. He has great hopes for the waterfront, when we will have prosperity again with "a chicken in every pot" as our great President Herbert Hoover once promised just before the Great Depression. October 28,1993

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE MAYOR

I read with great disappointment your letter in the RNA bulletin about seeking the public's help in finding more parking spaces for the City. Your approach to urban policy had, it seemed to me, a more modern framework. It is shortsighted and retrogressive to promote the parking of private automobiles within the limits of the City.

There is arguably no greater enemy to the quality of life in a city than the private auto. It pollutes the air, takes up precious space, and is aesthetically null. At the very least, any move in the direction of increasing the viability of automobile use in the City should be accompanied by an equal move in the direction of improving public transit.

Of course you are responding, as any politician would, to the demands of people who constantly whine for more parking because the City has become, for them, merely a parking lot. They drive to suburban malls to do their shopping, abandoning the formerly thriving business centers in the City which could be reached by walking or a quick bus trip. Many suburbanites park here before taking public transportation to work in New York. Add to those the number of drivers who come to our City from the suburbs, park for the day while they make their daily wages here (many as municipal workers), and take their pay checks with them to the suburbs. Perhaps we cannot force people who work for the City to live here, but can public policy not encourage it? Public buildings surrounded by acres of parking do just the opposite. Many times perfectly viable buildings are rejected for new uses (the Medical Center, for example) because of their lack of parking. Perhaps we could suggest that the people who work there live in the City and take a bus to work. Many businesses now provide vans for workers; hospitals and other public care institutions could do the same for patients, workers and clients.

People traditionally chose to live in cities to be close to the center of business, culture, and social activity. There was a time when one could walk to work, to shop, to pray, to dance. The very presence of people on the streets at all hours was a deterrent to crime. Parking lots and private vehicles invite crime and destroy community. It is the most amazing irony to me that developers are announcing with great fanfare the "mixed use" suburban development. "Mixed use" was the organic heart of the city. What we had - what we threw away with the cities we threw away - now must be artificially created, and we must spend many more dollars protecting ourselves against crime, many dollars creating ugly parking garages in the precious, limited space of the city.

There is a place for the auto in our lives, of course, but people should be encouraged to use their cars minimally. Public transportation which is swift, cheap, clean, and safe should be highest on the list of priorities for a 21st century leader. I probably will not live to see the day when public transportation is free and private autos are banned within city limits, but many scholars of urban affairs believe that will indeed be the public policy of the future.

You first attracted my attention and support by resisting the efforts of Christ Hospital to make the cliff on which upper Jersey City stands a vast parking lot. I

cannot but wonder at the shortsightedness of those who argue for more parking lots along the waterfront - our most valuable asset. The regulations which call for parking spaces allotted according to the size of new buildings are misguided. The overall direction of public policy should be to find alternates to private automobile use within city limits.

I am not such a hopeless dreamer as to imagine that Americans will give up their passion for automobiles, any more than they will for guns. But it is up to leaders like you, who have hitherto shown political courage in promoting other ground-breaking ideas, to show city-dwellers how much life here could be improved by less, rather than more, parking spaces.

I will settle for the possible. I look forward to another public commitment, as explicit as the parking one, on your part - a commitment to improved public transit. The huge success of private vans has proved that there is a desire and need for comfortable, quick, and safe public transportation. It is up to you to articulate the advantages to the public of less private automobiles and more mass transit within the City. Why don't you call upon the citizens of the City to help you do that, rather than help you find more parking?

Barbara Petrick
Jersey City Heights
October 11, 1993

FALL

an original poem by Maria Tuzzo

Crisp fall air
Trees all in color
It's the time of the year
When leaves are aflutter.

Bright sun, shines on pumpkins
All golden and round
And gleams on the foliage
That covers the ground.

Grass barely grows now
Most flowers don't bloom
The earth is preparing
For winter's cold gloom.

Birds don't appear much
In the clouded blue sky
To a much warmer climate
They've decided to fly.

In spite of what seems
Like nature's retreat
I love autumn weather
More than summer's bold heat.

I look forward to watching
Without rhyme or reason
The changes in fall
My favorite season.

SEE YOU AT OUR NEXT RNA MEETING ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 9TH AT 7:15 PM.

MY EXPERIENCE: Shopping

Have you gone shopping in any of the major stores lately? I was forced to go as I needed a few things to wear. As I entered the store, there wasn't a sales person around to help me. But if I was going to take something the security would have surely jumped upon me. I finally came upon some sales help, but I saw they were very busy combing their hair, applying lipstick and snapping their gum. I asked if all the sizes were out on the racks and they answered me quickly as it was break time for them. I looked and looked and could not find my size.

I asked where the men's sport shirts were and the sales help answered in with the ladies blouses as they were unisex. Suddenly some boys about 12 years old came by. The tee shirts they tried on were almost down to the floor because they were too big for them, hanging over their shoulders. The pants were baggy and over their shoes and the belts were about 4 sizes larger with the excess hanging down. I said, "Hey kids those are my size clothes." They looked at me as though I was nuts. The sneakers were only tied halfway up and I saw some of them had lights in the back of the heel.

Finally I got to the register after finding what I wanted to buy. There were two registers open and one person on each line. These girls were busy exchanging photos of their friends and sipping coffee. When the sales girl asked me the prices of the item, I replied I thought that was your job. She didn't know and had to call down to the department for the price. By that time the line was building up and everyone looking as if I had two heads.

Finally she got the price and the items were placed in a bag that could only hold a postage stamp. When I asked for a larger bag or a shopping bag, the cashier claimed there was a small charge even though I had spent a considerable amount. As I am leaving the store, the alarms go off (this put the icing on the cake) because the cashier forgot to desensitize my purchase. By that time I was all tired out. It certainly was an adventure to go shopping.

Jack F. Rea

NOVEMBER

Turkey time, gobble, gobble.
Leaves turning color,
Election Day, Veteran's Day.
A Happy Thanksgiving to all.

Madeline Tuzzo Rea

HOLIDAY CAROLING

Anyone interested in going Caroling this Christmas should come to the November 9th meeting. We will organize the event for the Holidays if there is sufficient interest and willing participants.

NEWSLETTER STAFF

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IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN ADVERTISING IN THE RNA NEWSLETTER, PLEASE MAIL (2) OF YOUR BUSINESS CARDS AND A CHECK [EITHER $10/ONE MONTH OR $60/NINE MONTHS] TO RNA, 232 OGDEN AVENUE, JERSEY CITY, N.J. 07307.

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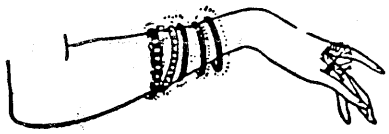

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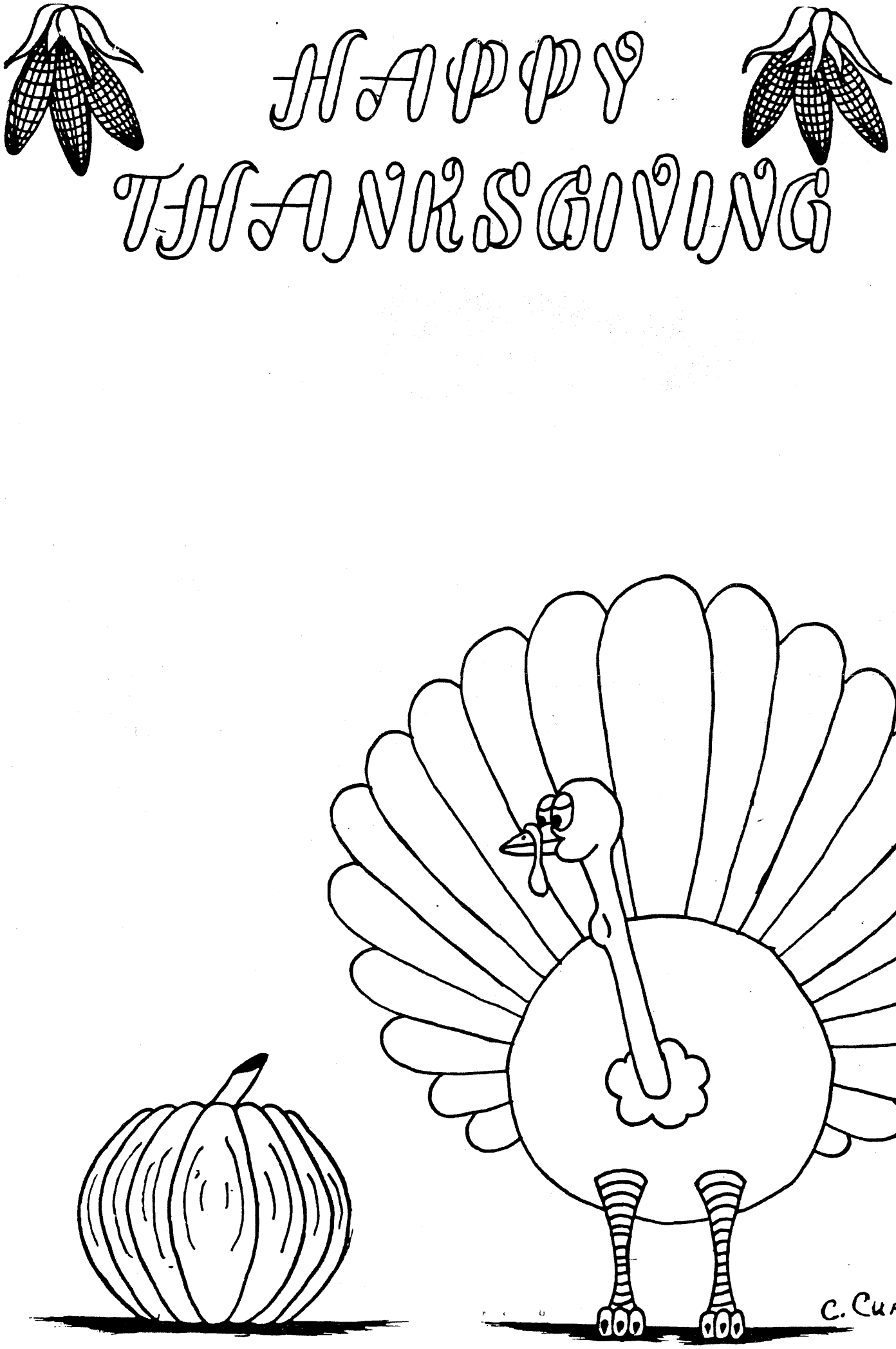
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C. CURTIS

FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

COME TO OUR NEXT RNA MEETING ON
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 9TH at 7:15 PM
to discuss RNA's HOLIDAY Activities

HAPPY THANKSGIVING
TO ALL OUR MEMBERS,
NEIGHBORS,
AND FRIENDS!

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NEWSLETTER

1993 JERSEY CITY INCINERATOR LEAF COLLECTION SCHEDULE

Special pick-up days are provided during the fall season. Please collect your leaves in the **FREE biodegradable brown bags** and put them out on the appropriate dates listed below.

***Absolutely, positively no plastic bags may be used for leaves!**

LEAVES WILL BE COLLECTED ON THE FOLLOWING THURSDAYS:

NOVEMBER 4	DECEMBER 16
NOVEMBER 18	DECEMBER 30
DECEMBER 2	

FREE BIODEGRADABLE BAGS will be available from the following:

a) the RNA Meeting on Nov. 9th.
b) Maria Tuzzo, call 659-2245 after 6 pm.
c) Incinerator Authority offices, call 432-4645, ext. 36.

HELP RNA AND JERSEY CITY
WORK TOWARD A BETTER ENVIRONMENT.